

TERRORISM AND PANIC*

RENOS K PAPADOPOULOS, Essex University, UK

ABSTRACT *This paper attempts to develop a psychological perspective on the phenomenon of terrorism while attending to the epistemological traps inherent in this kind of endeavour. Etymological, mythological, historical and psychological examinations of terrorism and panic enable the emergence of key characteristics – polarization and indiscriminateness – and a split between reality and imagination. The concept of a unipolar archetype is developed to account for the dark fascination and gripping power of these phenomena. The numinous nature of unipolar archetypal possession is identified and discussed. Copyright © 2006 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

Key words: panic; terror; archetypes; trauma; unipolarity

The terrorist attacks on US cities on 11 September 2001 provoked a host of responses worldwide. These ranged from the known US-led military reaction, to public academic and psychological debates about terrorism; in addition, privately, individuals and groups all over the world were forced to reflect on a number of vital issues pertaining to the fundamentals of contemporary life and the meaning of death. Jungian analysts have joined their voices to this response and this paper has been inspired by a need to contribute to this debate and these reflections.

The first question that needs to be addressed is the legitimacy of involving analytical psychology in matters of this nature – the actual events of 11 September and the US reaction to them. If what happened was a political act within the context of clear historical parameters, can Jungian analysts

offer anything meaningful to the understanding of this painful set of events? The obvious danger is that of forcing psychological explanations onto phenomena that, by nature, are not psychological (Papadopoulos, 1998). But what makes phenomena qualify for psychological reflection? Are there specific categories of phenomena that are amenable to psychological scrutiny and others that are not?

Shortly after 11 September, headlines on the Web site of the US news agency CNN reported that American specialists confirmed that the terrorist suicide hijackers responsible for the atrocities were not suffering from psychopathological symptoms and, therefore, constituted a new kind of phenomenon, emphasizing that the culprits were well adjusted and mature individuals who were fully aware of their actions. That state-

*This is a slightly modified version of a paper that was commissioned for the journal *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica* and was published as 'Terrorismo e panico' in *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica* 2002; 13(65): 165–81. It was subsequently published in French as 'Terrorisme et panique' in *Cahiers Jungiens de Psychanalyse* 2003; 108: 7–20.



SHOUT
SHARE **IT**

ment implied that psychological explanations are useful only in throwing light on motives of people who commit acts of destructiveness in various pathological states and, conversely, they are not useful in cases of healthy individuals. A further implication is that psychologically healthy and 'normal' individuals are not capable of committing acts of destruction. Yet, as we know, 'normal' people have been responsible for virtually all the calculated and wilful destruction on our planet, including most of the wars.

Jung's own approach was to reflect psychologically on any phenomena he considered appropriate, regardless of their original nature; he followed the same principle in examining religious, historical, sociological and other phenomena. What seems to be more relevant is the specific way one reflects psychologically on such phenomena rather than whether one uses a psychological approach or not to understand certain phenomena. The approach psychologists usually follow is to attempt to analyse societal phenomena by focusing on the intrapsychic dimensions of the protagonists. However, I would argue that Jung's approach was different in so far as he mainly endeavoured to explore the network of interrelationships between the collective and intrapsychic realms. Thus, if one were to use a personal methodology, the focus is likely to be on the intrapsychic dimensions of the protagonists, which are then likely to lead to an emphasis on a pathologized explanation; whereas, if one were to attempt to extend the Jungian approach it may be possible to locate the personal phenomena in the context of their interaction with their wider socio-political contexts (Papadopoulos, 1998).

TERROR AND TERRORISM

Terrorism is defined in relation to the state of being terrorized and of being in terror. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*,

terror is 'the state of being terrified or greatly frightened; intense fear, fright or dread'. It is interesting that a personal feeling gives the name for a social state. It is as if we said 'sadness-ism' or 'happiness-ism'. I am not aware of any other similar occurrence, apart from the 'Great Depression' (of the 1930s in the US) and, of course there, the word depression does not only refer to personal feelings but to an economic decline. The relationship between a personal feeling and a societal state, as in terrorism, creates an important connection between these two realms. It creates a Janus-faced phenomenon with two faces – one personal/intrapsychic and the other impersonal/collective; once we understand terrorism in this way, then it should be more amenable to a Jungian approach.

It is interesting that the word 'terrorism' was coined in the early 1790s to refer to the activities of the revolutionary government in France during the period that was called 'the Terror', when thousands of its opponents were put to death. Yet, according to the current definition of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): 'Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.' Whereas the very origin of the word has the government as the source of terrorism, the FBI definition places the government as its victim. This illustrates another double face of terrorism – often it is political considerations that define terrorism and not absolute emotional or objective states. We all know that a person or a group of people can be defined by some as 'terrorist/s' and by others as 'freedom fighter/s'.

A more neutral and comprehensive definition of terrorism, from an academic perspective, defines it as an

anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organisations), (imperilled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily used. (Schmid, 1998, 28)

This definition clarifies that the main intent of terrorist acts is to deliver a message through methods of creating terror. The main emphasis of terrorist acts is not necessarily on the degree of destruction itself but rather the maximum terror generated.

The etymological origin of terror is in the Greek *tromos* (terror). *Tromos* means trembling, quacking, quivering, especially from fear. The verb is *tremo* or *treo* and it means to tremble, to shiver. It is an onomatopoeic word coming from the *trrr* sound of a shivering person. This means that it is a very basic word with a direct somatic and universal base. Hoffmann connects the verb *treo* with the Lithuanian *tresti* which means ‘possessed by orgasm with reference to a bitch’ (Hoffmann, 1950, 446). Therefore, any form of tremor, shaking and trembling can be connected with this etymological root and so the sexual, orgasmic connotation of terrorism should not be forgotten.

Subsequent to the French revolution and its long aftermath, the word ‘terrorism’ seems to have receded into the background until it was revived again in the nineteenth century with the emergence of the anarchist and nationalist movements in Europe that

carried out various terrorist attacks. From then onwards, until today, the term ‘terrorism’ has been associated with actions that are perceived mainly in polarized ways – by one political faction as acts of terrorism and by the opposite faction as acts of heroism.

Indeed, polarization, along with all its concomitant consequences, is one of the main features of terrorism. The usually indiscriminating nature of choice of individual targets within a clearly defined collective target group is one of the features that enhance terror. As long as a person belongs to that target group she or he is then a potential victim. The randomness of choice, and hence often the innocence of the victims, increases the terror. The absurdity is that target groups are defined in highly specific and biased ways, which do not always correspond with the individual identity that group members themselves ascribe to themselves. For example, when the Nazis targeted all Jews indiscriminately, not all Jews had a sense of Jewish identity. When terrorists attack nationals of one country, victims can be people who may not necessarily disagree with the terrorists’ political sentiments; yet, their very belonging to a group, according to certain criteria, makes them potential targets of the terrorist group in question.

It is this extreme form of polarization and indiscriminateness, which characterizes terrorism, that I want to examine further.

PAN AND PANIC

Polarization in this context leaves no room for middle ground and for any further consideration and discrimination. Polarization belongs to a collective story within which there is a clear division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, friends and enemies, black and white, right and left. Polarization cannot possibly include any refined discernment or consideration for the individual story and it does not allow for any differentiation. Terrorism

is based on such polarization where one group of people will attack another group outside the framework of the expected and predictable. All these are the conditions that create maximum terror and panic. These are also conditions that are associated with the original meaning of the word 'panic', which was, of course, the state connected with the ancient Greek god Pan.

Pan was a strange god. Ken Dowden even calls him 'a Citroën 2CV amongst gods' and clarifies that 'Pan is a curiosity amongst Greek gods: goat-legged and sometimes goat-headed, not a grand Olympian, but a rather lowly, country god. Maybe he is a spirited god with the sexual drive of a ram, but in cult he only inhabits Arcadia to any extent' (Dowden, 1992, 126). This means that Pan was full of contradictions and very much a local god, in a sense; a partisan god who did not aspire to the lofty heights of Olympus but was content with his parochial identity. Despite his limited locality, paradoxically, he was the god of nature and one of his characteristics was his all inclusiveness, his totality. The word *pan* in Greek means everything, all, entire, as in 'pantheism', or 'pan-European'. Admittedly, the two words are of a different etymological origin: in Greek, the god Pan (Πάν) has an acute accent (which in ancient Greek pronunciation indicated that there was a tone rising about a musical fifth), whereas pan (πᾶν), as in 'everything', has a circumflex (which was used only on long-duration syllables). Nevertheless, the indiscriminating totality of Pan was another of his attributes. Pan was explicitly related to concepts of totality in several ways, including:

- the music from his panpipes was pleasing to everybody;
- he was the lord of all the flocks;
- he was pleasing to all the Olympian gods;

- he was also considered to be the symbol of the Universe – the Great All (in an inscription in the shrine of Asclepius at Epidaurus it is said: 'All the earth and sea are mixed thanks to you, for you are the bulwark of all, O Pan, Pan!');
- his pipes (Pan pipes) consisted of seven reeds on account of the harmony of the heavens, in which there are seven sounds, which refer to the seven realms of the universe.

However, the most striking aspect of Pan's totality is connected with panic, where under his influence people enter a state of total confusion, fear and terror.

Pan represented the spirit of the wildness in people. He was the god of fertility, of unbridled male sexuality and carnal desire. It is said that he was the son of Hermes, which explains his craftiness and swiftness but other versions have him as the son of Zeus and Hybris. Hybris was the personification of insolence, excessive pride, violence and outrage. One of her other children was Koros who was the personification of disdain and surfeit. Therefore, Pan's parents and step-brother convey some characteristics of his own wild, unpredictable and harsh nature.

The original meaning of 'panic' was with reference to Pan's interference in war when he would help his favourite side to victory by spreading 'panic' in the enemy ranks.

Panic is always an irrational terror involving noise and confused disturbance that unexpectedly overtakes a military encampment, usually at night. Its suddenness, immediacy is stressed . . . Furthermore, there is a stress on the lack of any visible cause, a lack that leads to fantasy; the victims of panic are in the grip of their imagination, which is to say, of their worst fears. (Borgeaud, 1979, 88–9)

It is said that the Athenians, against all odds, defeated at Marathon the Persians who had

outnumbered them, due to the assistance of Pan who spread panic amongst the invading Asian armies.

Another important facet of Pan is his own split and unmediated bipolarity, as in the duality of his own human and animal nature. As Professor Philippe Borgeaud (1979, 121) put it, in Pan

the 'imaginary' and the 'real' are contrasting twin aspects of a single nature. Music and noise, longing and animality correspond. Pan is double in his essence . . . It cannot be so with his victims. Panic deception, as it carries them away, also splits them into two.

Pan was capable of inducing either seduction or repulsion. But his characteristic impact was that of splitting and polarizing, both at individual and collective levels. In military contexts, Pan acted by making a soldier fail to 'recognize his own people or even his own language, and in the end a military camp divides into two antagonistic groups' (Borgeaud, 1979, 121).

Pan creates polarization and splitting by seducing some people with an idea to which they adhere totally, whereas others consider that idea to be abhorrent and demonize all its sympathizers.

ARCHETYPAL REFLECTIONS

Jung (1945, para. 411) wrote

When evil breaks at any point into the order of things, our whole circle of psychic protection is disrupted. Action inevitably calls up reaction, and, in the matter of destructiveness, this turns out to be just as bad as the crime, and possibly even worse, because the evil must be exterminated root and branch.

The cycle of violence becomes tragically inevitable and unstoppable. One way of understanding this is in terms of the unipolarity of archetypal possession (Papadopoulos, 2000a), which is very similar to a possession

by Pan. The human dimension includes polarities in various combinations; however, certain acts, such as the 11 September attacks, are acts of unadulterated evil (unipolar) in their ingenious and luciferian purity. The big question is how ordinary human beings enter into that space to commit such inhuman acts. Empty words such as 'fanatic' or 'fundamentalist' are slogans and do not assist us in coming closer to capturing the uncapturable.

The attack on 11 September was not a psychological act. It was a purely political act, which was based on a certain context of socio-historical realities. Osama Bin Laden and George W Bush are not archetypal figures but real people who belong to their own separate and unique historical and political contexts and within clear ideological and political parameters. Nevertheless, the psychological impact of the political events develops its own semi-autonomous momentum and it is only this facet of the current events that Jungian psychology (or any psychology, for that matter) can possibly address.

The conception, planning and execution of the attack on the New York twin towers were acts of pure genius and, of course, of an evil genius. Nevertheless, the enormity of their impact generated a whirlpool of responses that follow the pattern of what Jung noted about the escalating effects of evil acts.

The main point I wish to make here is that once a certain kind of violence becomes coupled with certain other parameters, then a lethal combination of archetypal unipolarity is developed that creates an irresistible whirlpool within which everything and everybody around tend to become extremely polarized.

This particularly powerful and deadly mixture of archetypal potency is activated when a series of unipolarities occur. This

happens when images of the extreme opposites emerge; the extreme opposites are pure and inhuman. Pure evil and pure good cannot exist in human contexts – they can exist only archetypally. This means that most constituent elements of this lethal mixture/cluster must be located almost exclusively within one pole of the archetype. Most specifically, the violence will need to be of an extreme form, to affect a large number of people, and to have the mark of a genius. Moreover, such an act would need to be coupled with certain extreme forms of mythological imagery, e.g. heroic or satanic with superhuman qualities.

It seems that the events of 11 September 2001 fit well within this schema. The response was archetypally predictable. President Bush fell right into the polarized imagery of archetypal unipolarity when he said that he wanted to ‘rid the world of evil’, when he initially called the operation to counteract terrorism ‘infinite justice’ (which some American political commentators wanted to complement with ‘infinite peace’ – Dmitri Seals in *The Brown Daily Herald* on Friday, 21 September 2001), and then he spoke of a ‘crusade’ against terrorism. Later he divided the world between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (‘whoever is not with us he is with them’). All these images are of an extreme, inhuman form, which betrays their archetypal unipolarity. Thus, archetypally speaking, he was mirroring the 11 September terrorists in their polarization and sinking deeper into a mythical archetypality.

In Jungian terms, it could be said that this pure evil is a pure unipolar archetype (Papadopoulos, 2000a); an archetype completely devoid of any personal and human content. It exists in its uncontaminated collective nature. Thus, the fascination and attraction have almost a numinous character. There is a ‘dark’ excitement, which engulfs everybody and which we cannot afford to verbal-

ize because it would come dangerously close to attributing and admitting evil dimensions in people (Papadopoulos, 1998). Aware and honest people can experience this kind of excitement but they are then horrified, terrorized by their own admission. Those who cannot afford such an insightfulness have the very same feelings, but unwittingly they express them (act them out) in different and transformed (mostly, deformed) ways, which escalate the polarization.

As Jung (1945, para. 410) wrote, describing similar phenomena, ‘the sight of evil kindles evil in the soul – there is no getting away from this fact.’ Crudely speaking, deep down, all of us want ‘this’ dark excitement to continue but do not dare to acknowledge it. If pressed, it is difficult for us to identify what the ‘this’ is. I would say that the ‘this’ is an elusive but lethal cocktail of excitement and fascination wrapped up in various forms of political, moral and patriotic sentiments, all in all creating a most intoxicatingly powerful archetypal whirlpool.

For example, Bush’s ‘call to arms’ serves precisely the same function – it keeps the ‘this’ active and alive and ensures its perpetuation. However, nobody ever feels that he or she serves anything evil – all of us feel that we serve the pure ‘good’ (cf. Bush’s distinction between ‘good’ and ‘evil’). This whirlpool twists things in peculiar ways to such an extent that we tend to do abominable things in the name of noble causes while we keep believing that we are serving ‘the’ good.

Mark Twain (1905) wrote a short story called ‘The war prayer’ in which he describes the day when the volunteers were leaving their small town at the beginning of the Civil War to go to battle. He makes the reader feel the brimming patriotic fervour of the whole town when their young soldiers in their shiny uniforms paraded to the church under the adoring eyes of their proud families; the preacher offered a prayer to ‘help them to

crush the foe' and 'to grant to them and their flag and country imperishable honor and glory' (Twain, 1905, 138). Then 'an aged stranger' came into the church and uninvited told the congregation that God had heard both prayers they had offered, 'the spoken and the unspoken', and proceeded to 'put into words' their unspoken prayer and said things such as 'O Lord . . . help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells . . . help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief' (1905, 139–40).

Twain ended the story with these words: 'It was believed afterwards that the man was a lunatic, because there was no sense in what he said' (1905, 140).

This story shows how once we operate within the context of absolute polarities the same phenomenon is seen from completely opposite perspectives and realities. The polarization creates a barrier that makes it impossible and, indeed, insane, to consider the polar opposite perspective.

Thus, within the whirlpool of the unipolarity of 'pure good' and of 'noble causes' it is logically and ontologically inconceivable to perceive anything in one's own beliefs and actions that is not an expression of pure good – no shred of anything evil can possibly be perceived and if anybody dared to doubt it he would be branded insane. Gripped by the unipolarity of the archetype, people have the illusion that they are fully conscious of the totality (bipolarity) of a situation and in this way they act feeling convinced that they have a clear perspective of the reality and that their actions are fair and just; yet this illusionary veil that unipolarity creates tricks people into acting blindly. Under these circumstances, images of cleansing (for example, ethnic cleansing) abound in

all their possible forms ranging from genuine altruistic actions to abominable atrocities – all done in the name of purity and cleanliness (Papadopoulos, 1997, 2000a).

Yet, insofar as all this is caught up within the fascinating whirlpool of numinous unipolarity, the actual acts, under these circumstances, fire at random in all different directions in an uncontrollable way. This means that acts that begin to protect the pure good of one's own noble cause, imperceptibly to the doer, turn to the opposite polarity of pure evil. Not many people will doubt the fact that the terrorists believed that they were serving a purely good cause (so pure that they were prepared to die for it). The tragic irony was that President Bush was sucked into believing in an identical way the same thing – that he has a just cause for which he is asking his soldiers to die.

Under these extreme and archetypal circumstances, all political sides identify with the unipolarity of uncompromising, pure and unadulterated 'good'; however, in so far it is in this pure and inhuman form, no 'good' in fact can possibly be good. Any unipolarity switches from the one extreme to the other in such ways that its actors are not aware of the twists – they begin with the most noble of intentions but if they are caught up in this whirlpool, before they realize it, they act in a similar way to the people they want to eliminate with the result that all are bent on mindless forms of destruction. For example, the death of innocent civilians caused by the US-led intervention in Afghanistan by December 2001 had already exceeded the number of innocent civilians that were killed by the terrorists attacks in the US on the 11 September.

What the terrorists managed to stir up in us (those who could afford to be stirred up) was our own sense of dissatisfaction with the 'evils' of our modern soulless life. For example, many people responded to the 11

September by strengthening their resolve to assist the poor and disadvantaged. The terrorist attacks seem to have created a polarized response – the reactive, hard-hitting military reply and the soul-searching reflection on the nature and implications of our already split world into an increasingly larger chasm between them – the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’. For those of us who allowed ourselves to be disturbed, it created an exceedingly uncomfortable feeling by activating an unconscious sense of guilt. Societies always have a sense of critical stance against themselves and individuals also criticize consciously our utilitarian, materialistic and harsh society. However, when it is attacked, we tend to defend the very same society, characterizing it as ‘civilized’, ‘free’, ‘democratic’ and so forth, and contrasting it against the otherness of the societies from which the terrorists come.

Usually, there is nothing revolutionary or radically subversive in criticizing and indeed condemning our own lifestyles as soulless. All of us are used to expressing our dissatisfaction with this lifestyle, within safe and sanctioned contexts that do not threaten its continuation in any serious way; moreover, our society is accustomed to allowing and indeed encouraging certain people to remind us of the ‘evils of our modern life’ as long as this is done within sanctioned contexts. Artists, authors, intellectuals, journalists, politicians and spiritual leaders are sustained by our society to keep reminding us of the evils of our ways of life, but all that is done in a cosy manner that keeps our spirit a little refreshed but does not substantially alter the very fabric of what is criticized. It is well known that society absorbs rebellion by turning it into fashion. What the terrorists had the audacity to do was to shake our very foundations with their ‘message’. They struck a severe blow at the very ‘values’ that we sometimes hated ourselves for adhering

to. And that is very perplexing. We hate them for both causing an abominable, actual and most real atrocity but also (unconsciously) because they reminded us of our own ‘hypocrisy’.

Under the blinding brightness of luminous and numinous unipolarities, anything that is not unipolar appears as an unbearable compromise, as unacceptable weakness, as contemptible frailty; that was what Hitler could not bear to see around him and that is why he went all out to purify the world from the vermin of Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, people with mental deficiencies, and so forth. What is opposite to the unipolarities is all the bipolarity of messy humanness – of all that is human (relative, mixed and impure, relative and relational, compassionate, deficient, weak, imperfect, and so forth). Despite their obvious and seriously bad deficiencies, these bipolarities in fact comprise what is human and humane and compassionate. Odysseas Elytis (the Greek poet, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1979) hailed the smallness of the great humanity with his famous verse ‘this small world the great!’ (Elytis, 1981, 50).

This is what is behind the compassionate approach of religions that attend to the weak and suffering, the sinners and downtrodden. A bipolar stance can appreciate our frailties while not giving up our idealistic strivings and can locate us in the space of the actual struggle to grapple with these opposing tendencies and diversities within us and around us.

In other words, once a certain level of unipolarity is reached (beyond the human space) then things begin to spin around and highly positive and highly negative elements are activated at random – sanctity and monstrosity keep interchanging in imperceptible ways. Saints become devils and devils saints. In that space human reason or anything human cannot possibly be of any help; the

archetypal whirlpool sucks away everything human and humane and exposes the bare purities (cf. Plato's ideas, archetypes *per se*) in their inhuman form.

That is perhaps the idea of surrender in a religious sense (not a fatalistic one). The more we try to find a solution in that space the more become muddled up and we become possessed at random by good and evil, mercilessly thrown about and sucked into this whirlpool and dazzled by the seductive numinosity of the experience. Good and evil, in their pure and inhuman ways, engulf us and invade us and we become prophets and villains, whilst maintaining some unrelated external coherent narrative about ideals and the pursuit of 'good'.

The realm of pure unipolarities is therefore a most paradoxical space where all kinds of contradictory impulses are activated and expressed unexpectedly. This leads to a most dangerous and confusing sense of unreality in which people are seduced into believing that they are firmly adhering to their legitimate moral principles and beliefs while, in fact, being thrown about by the whirlpool of unipolarity.

ARCHETYPAL PANIC

This state of inhuman unipolarity is precisely the realm of Pan. The Pan-ic possession forces people to locate themselves in collective and impersonal stories where they do not exist as individuals but as members of certain factions; the same possession is characterized by the suddenness, the unexpectedness, the irrationality. Moreover, the Pan-ic possession activates the polarized split between seduction or repulsion – terrorists are adored as martyrs by the members of their own faction and demonized by the others. Pan-ic possession drives people beyond reason and splits them within both at the personal and collective levels. Glowing in the nobility of their self-righteousness,

persons become instruments of purification of their faction from the impurity of others.

The all-engulfing totality of Pan (*pan* meaning 'all', 'total', 'everything') helps us to understand more fully the complete absorption that unipolarity creates. The seductive whirlpool of unipolar archetypality forces the radical split between good and evil, pure and imperfect, absolute and relative, perfect and corrupt, total and partial, which is precisely what Pan's possession creates. Pan's unmediated and eternally split opposites typify the one-sidedness of terror, terrorism and panic. The somatic and visceral reactions to panic are congruent with the onomatopoeic derivation of terror: the reactions are deeply felt and not only create a tremor in an individual person but also shake the foundations both of our buildings and our societies and beliefs.

Finally, there are two further important considerations that are worth mentioning even if they will not be developed further in this paper. The first is that the implications of the split, unipolarity, numinosity and seduction of the Panic whirlpool are not limited to the field and phenomena we observe but extend, in their all-encompassing and engulfing totality, to the very process and methodology of our own observations. This means that the tendency to limit our observations and comments to an exclusively psychological epistemology and thus to exclude all the other important contributing realities, variables and dimensions of the terrorist phenomena (for example, socio-political, historical, and economic) is in itself a product of the Pan-ic archetypal unipolarity. One of the most important functions in becoming involved with these phenomena (either as an active worker or as an observer/commentator) is the 'ability to distinguish the various overlapping epistemologies involved in order to avoid (a) pathologising human suffering, (b) psychol-

ogising socio-political dimensions, and (c) moralising the psychological or psychologising the moral' (Papadopoulos, 2002a). All this discriminating ability tends to be undermined severely (if not completely obliterated) by the one-sidedness of psychological explanations of these phenomena, which, as has been argued here, is connected with the archetypal dynamics involved in terrorism.

The second consideration is the comparison between these phenomena and the epistemology of trauma (Papadopoulos, 2000b, 2001, 2002b). There is a striking similarity between the unipolarity created by the societal discourse on the trauma and the unipolarity of terror, Pan and panic. In short, trauma creates a sharp distinction between victims and violators. Moreover, if the survivor is seen exclusively as a victim, invariably the professional is likely to be positioned as a saviour and then both tend to team up against the violator/s. However, apart from denuding the 'victim' of his or her strengths, this closed triangle tends to perpetuate itself, creating endless variations with different people in the same roles, for example the professional (saviour) may experience the survivor (victim) as his or her own violator when the latter keeps oppressing the former with increasingly more unreasonable demands; the victim-saviour couple may also keep creating more violators that they will need to defend against, such as the managers of the relevant services and other individuals and bodies who do not offer the kind of unconditional support that the couple expects and tyrannically demand (Papadopoulos, 2000b; 2002b).

The trauma discourse could therefore be seen as setting up a similar and comparably asphyxiating dehumanizing and archetypally polarized situation. It could be argued that the archetypal triangle of victim/saviour/violator is the prototype of the more specific triangle of victim/saviour (psychologists)/terrorists. Trauma creates compara-

ble polarization, possession and unipolar rigidity, self-righteousness and numinosity.

Thus, by connecting the phenomenology of terror, Pan, and panic with an expanded understanding of the Jungian ideas of archetypal bipolarity and possession, we are offered a coherent framework within which to locate these disturbing and numinous phenomena, not only in terms of our observation and understanding of them but also in terms of understanding the ways that we are predisposed (or indeed forced) to understand them.

REFERENCES

- Borgeaud P. The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece. Translated by K Atlass and J Redfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Dowden K. The Uses of Greek Mythology. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Elytis O. Selected Poems. London: Anvil Press, 1981.
- Hoffmann JB. Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen. München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1950.
- Jung CG. After the catastrophe. In *Collected Works*, vol. 10. London: Routledge, 1945.
- Papadopoulos RK. Individual identity and collective narratives of conflict. *Harvest: Journal for Jungian Studies* 1997; 43(2): 7–26.
- Papadopoulos RK. Destructiveness, atrocities and healing: epistemological and clinical reflection. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 1998; 43(4): 455–77.
- Papadopoulos RK. Factionalism and interethnic conflict: narratives in myth and politics. In T Singer (ed.) *The Vision Thing. Myth, Politics and Psyche in the World*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000a.
- Papadopoulos RK. A matter of shades: trauma and psychosocial work in Kosovo. In N Losi (ed.) *Psychosocial and Trauma Response in War-Torn Societies; the Case of Kosovo*. Geneva: IOM, 2000b.
- Papadopoulos RK. Refugees, therapists and trauma: systemic reflections. *Context: The Magazine of the Association for Family Therapy* 2001; 54: 5–8.
- Papadopoulos RK. Working with survivors of political violence. In J Raphael-Leff (ed.)

- Between Sessions and Behind/Beyond the Couch. London: Karnac Books, 2002a.
- Papadopoulos RK. Refugees, home and trauma. In RK Papadopoulos (ed.) *No Place Like Home: Therapeutic Care for Refugees*. London: Karnac, 2002b.
- Schmid AP (ed.). *Violent Crime and Conflicts. Proceedings of an International Conference held at Courmayeur, Mont Blanc, October 1997* by the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme. Milan, ISPAC, 1998.
- Twain M. The war prayer. In MJ Weiss (ed.) *Man and War*. New York: Dell, 1963.

Correspondence:

E-mail: renos@essex.ac.uk.